

courage; and social reformers such as suffragist Leonora Barry and labor organizer Mary Kenney O'Sullivan fought for the rights of others. Generations of Irish Americans have worked alongside their fellow Americans to build a more perfect Union, and America is a stronger Nation because of them.

During his visit to Ireland in 1963, President Kennedy reminded us that "our two nations, divided by distance, have been united by history." Today, people on both sides of the Atlantic are united not only by history, but also once again by a dream of a better way of life. In the spring of 1998, the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland sought to make that dream a reality at home when they voted overwhelmingly in support of the Good Friday Accord. America remains committed to the Irish people as they continue working to forge a brighter future in their own land. The road ahead is long, but the promise of peace is still within reach, and its rewards are great. This month, as we celebrate Saint Patrick's Day and our shared heritage with Ireland, we remember as well our common love of liberty, commitment to progress, and quest for lasting peace, and we look toward a future as proud as our past.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2000 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:01 a.m., March 2, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 3.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on International Agreements**

*March 1, 2000*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)*

Pursuant to subsection (b) of the Case-Zablocki Act, (1 U.S.C. 112b), I hereby transmit a report prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq**

*March 1, 2000*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting the 2000 Trade Policy Agenda and 1999 Report on the Trade Agreements Program**

*March 1, 2000*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2213), I transmit herewith the 2000 Trade Policy Agenda and 1999 Annual Report on the

Trade Agreements Program. The Report, as required by sections 122, 124, and 125 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, includes the Annual Report on the World Trade Organization and a 5-year assessment of the U.S. participation in the World Trade Organization.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
March 1, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2.

### **Interview With Katie Couric of NBC's Today Show**

*March 2, 2000*

#### **Michigan Shooting**

**Ms. Couric.** Mr. President, thank you so much for joining us.

**The President.** Good morning, Katie.

**Ms. Couric.** Good morning. Let me ask you, first of all, when you heard the story of a 6-year-old boy in Michigan, a first grader bringing a gun to school and shooting to death his 6-year-old classmate, what was your reaction?

**The President.** Well, first, I think I had a normal human reaction. I didn't respond as President. I was just—as a parent I was heartbroken, and then I was angry. I thought, you know, how did this child get the gun in the first place? What's a 6-year-old doing with a gun?

#### **Gun Control Legislation**

**Ms. Couric.** When something like this happens, politicians often jump on it as an excuse for more gun control. But I know that, Mr. President, you're very proud of pointing out that gun deaths have dropped to their lowest levels in more than 30 years in this country. So should we view this more as a tragedy than a reason to call for more gun control?

**The President.** Well, it's both. The gun death rate has dropped to its lowest point in 30 years, but it's still by far the highest of any advanced nation in the world. And if we had passed the child trigger lock provision and we applied it to all new guns, then

at least those guns would not be used by 6-year-olds to kill other 6-year-olds. I think that's very important. That's a part of this bill, which also closes the gun show loophole, and the background check law, bans the import of large ammunition clips, that the Congress has had for 8 months now with no action.

So I'm going to call the leaders of both parties in both Houses and ask them to come down here and break the logjam. There's been a House version and a Senate version of this bill for 8 months, and they have done nothing, and meanwhile, 13 kids every day—every single day there are 13 children who die from guns in this country. So I do think we need more legislation.

**Ms. Couric.** Well, why is it locked in committee, why has it been stalemated? And when would you like them to come to the White House?

**The President.** Well, I think it's been locked in committee because the Senate—the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate, so we got a tough bill in spite of fierce lobbying against it by the NRA. And the two Houses can't resolve their differences. But maybe this tragic death will help. We need these child trigger locks on the new handguns. That will begin to make a big difference. And then in this year's budget, I've asked them to fund some more research into smart gun technology, which would enable us to have guns that could only be fired by the adults who own them. That also would be a big advance.

One of the things that's being debated in Michigan is whether there should be parental accountability provisions. We had provisions in our law for that, so that all States would have these laws—several do, but most don't—and those were taken out, so maybe they'll be revisited in the conference as well.

But the main thing is, if we can just get the child trigger locks and fund investment in the smart gun technology, I think we'll be a long way down the road. Of course, I think ultimately what we ought to do is license handgun owners the way we license people who drive cars. I think that is the critical next step. And I hope that we will consider that, as well.